

HOW TO START A WORM BIN

TURN KITCHEN SCRAPS INTO NUTRIENT-RICH “BLACK GOLD”



I've always loved finding ways to recycle kitchen scraps and give something back to the garden, and starting a worm bin has been one of the most rewarding projects I've tried. Worm composting doesn't just reduce food waste — it creates incredibly rich soil, often called “black gold,” that plants absolutely love.

This printable walks you through the simple steps to set up a worm bin, care for your worms, and harvest nutrient-packed compost for your garden. Whether you're brand new to composting or just looking for a low-maintenance, sustainable project, worm composting is easier than you might think — and surprisingly satisfying.

Why a Worm Bin?

- Reduces kitchen waste sent to landfills
- Produces rich, organic compost for gardens
- Supports a more sustainable, eco-friendly lifestyle
- Works in small spaces, indoors or outdoors

Choosing the Right Worms

Not all worms are created equal. Red wigglers (*Eisenia fetida*) are the best choice for worm bins because they thrive in confined spaces and break down food quickly.

Red Wiggler Basics:

- Red-brown in color
- Eat up to half their body weight daily
- Thrive between 55–77°F
- Ideal for indoor worm bins

You can purchase red wigglers from garden centers, online suppliers, or other vermicomposters.

Choosing a Worm Bin

Your worm bin can be simple or store-bought — what matters most is comfort for the worms.

Look for a bin that has:

- Enough space for your food scraps
- Good ventilation
- Durable, non-toxic materials

Plastic totes, wooden bins, or commercial worm bins all work well.

Setting Up Your Worm Bin

1. Add moist bedding (shredded newspaper, cardboard, or coco coir)
2. Bedding should feel like a wrung-out sponge
3. Add a small amount of kitchen scraps
4. Gently place worms on top
5. Cover and allow worms time to settle in



Feeding Your Worms

Good Foods:

- Fruit and vegetable scraps
- Coffee grounds
- Crushed eggshells

Avoid:

- Meat and dairy
- Oily foods
- Citrus in large amounts

Always bury food scraps under bedding to prevent pests.

Maintaining Your Worm Bin

- Feed consistently, but don't overfeed
- Keep bedding moist, not wet
- Add dry bedding if moisture builds up
- Gently fluff bedding every few weeks for airflow

A healthy worm bin should smell earthy – not foul.

Harvesting Worm Castings

Worm castings are ready when the material looks dark, crumbly, and soil-like.

Move finished compost to one side, add fresh bedding and food to the other, and allow worms to migrate before harvesting.



Quick Troubleshooting Guide

- Smells bad? Add bedding and reduce feeding
- Fruit flies? Bury food deeper
- Too wet? Add dry cardboard
- Worms escaping? Check moisture, airflow, and temperature

Using Worm Castings in the Garden

- Mix into soil (¼–½ inch monthly)
- Use as a top dressing
- Add to seed-starting mixes
- Brew worm tea for liquid fertilizer

Prep Time

- Prep Time: 15–20 minutes
- Skill Level: Beginner
- Space Needed: Small (indoor or outdoor)

Starting a worm bin is a simple way to reduce waste, improve your garden, and connect more deeply with natural cycles. With a little care and consistency, your kitchen scraps can become some of the richest soil you'll ever use.

